(C) using the logical relations to obtain, without requiring user intervention, a document constraint descriptor defining a set of one or more constraints equivalent to the logical relations.

13. (Twice Amended) A machine for obtaining document constraint descriptors based on user signals, the machine comprising:

a processor; and

user interface circuitry for providing user signals to the processor;

the processor operating to:

receive user signals through the user interface circuitry indicating a set of attribute-value relations that can apply to documents;

use the user signals to obtain, without requiring user intervention, logical relations equivalent to the attribute-value relations, the logical relations comprising at least one of a sort and a feature; and

use the logical relations to obtain, without requiring user intervention, a document constraint descriptor defining a set of one or more constraints equivalent to the logical relations.

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 13 have been amended. Claims 1 and 13 have been amended solely to more explicitly recite the subject matter of the claimed invention. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution); (c) do not present any

additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. Applicants respectfully submit that the specification sufficiently teaches to one skilled in the art a method for obtaining document constraint descriptors based on user signals as recited in claim 1 and as similarly recited in claim 13.

Applicants respectfully assert, at least, pages 27-37 of the specification discuss the above-identified features of claims 1 and 13 and Figs. 3-10, for example, and the corresponding descriptions in the specification set forth various exemplary transactions that can be performed using the claimed invention.

Further, Applicants submit that the disclosure describing various processes (i.e., Knowledge Brokers and Feature Constraints), are used to implement various aspects of the claimed invention and thus, the disclosure is relevant to enabling one skilled in the art to make and use Applicant's claimed invention. It is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph for containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Specific language in claims 1 and 13 is identified as forming the basis of the rejection. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action merely states that the "obtaining document constraint descriptors from analysis of logical relations equivalent to received attribute-value relations, including

sorts and features" features of claims 1 and 13 are not enabling in the specification. Applicants respectfully assert, at least, pages 27-37 of the specification discuss the above-identified features of claims 1 and 13. In addition, Applicants submit that support for the "one of a sort and a feature" recited in claim 1 and 13 can be found, for example, on page 19, line 21 - page 20, line 6 of Applicants' specification. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter was added by the Amendment filed on July 31, 2002. It is respectfully requested the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5, 8 and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,794,233 to Rubinstein (hereinafter Rubinstein '233) in view of Wilson et al. (hereinafter "Wilson"), U.S. Patent No. 5,963,938. Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the combination of Rubinstein '233 and Wilson as applied to claim 1, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,404,294 to Karnik. Claims 9-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the combination of Rubinstein '233 and Wilson as applied to claim 1, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,721,897 to Rubinstein (hereinafter Rubinstein '897). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit none of Rubinstein '233, Wilson, Karnik and Rubinstein '897, teach, disclose or suggest a method for obtaining document constraint descriptors based on user signals comprising receiving user signals indicating a set of attribute value relations that can apply to documents, using the user single signals to obtain, without requiring user intervention, logical relations equivalent to the attribute value relations, the logical relations comprising at least one of a sort and a feature, and using the logical relations to obtain, without requiring user intervention, a document constraint descriptor defining a set of one or more constraints equivalent to a logical relations as recited in claim 1 and as similarly recited in claim 13.

Instead, Applicants respectfully submit Rubinstein '233 simply prompts a computer user to construct a query expression from an automatically generated list of keyword phrases (col. 2, lines 37-40). In fact, the primary objective of Rubenstein '233 is to identify, for a user, keyword phrases in a plurality of documents. The user is then prompted to select keyword phrases and, based on the selected phrases, the documents containing the selected keyword phrases are presented to the user (col. 1, line 60 - col. 2, line 3).

Further, Applicants submit that the objective of Wilson is to disclose an apparatus for selecting arguments, logical operators, Boolean operators, and relations for use in execution of a logical function by a processor (col. 2, lines 16-20). Specifically, in Wilson, the user must actively select the requirements, parameters, Boolean operators, relations, etc. Accordingly, similar to Rubenstein '233, nowhere does Wilson suggest using the user single signals to obtain, without requiring user intervention, logical relations equivalent to the attribute value relations, the logical relations comprising at least one of a sort and a feature, and using the logical relations to obtain, without requiring user intervention, a document constraint descriptor defining a set of one or more constraints equivalent to a logical relations as recited in claim 1 and as similarly recited in claim 13.

In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that nowhere in Rubinstein '233, Wilson, Karnik or Rubinstein '897 is it taught, disclosed or suggested to obtain, without requiring user intervention, logical relations equivalent to the attribute value relations, the logical relations comprising at least one of a sort and a feature, as recited in claims 1 and 13. For at least this reason, Applicant respectfully asserts that neither Karnik or Rubinstein '897, either alone or in combination, overcomes the deficiencies of Rubinstein '233, as discussed above with respect to claims 1 and 13.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully assert the combination of Rubinstein '233, Wilson, Karnik and Rubinstein '897 fails to teach, disclose or suggest all the features of Applicants' claims 1-16. It is respectfully requested the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1 - 16 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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JAO:MMI

Attachment:
Appendix

Date: December 24, 2002

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION
Please grant any extension necessary for entry;
Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 24-0037

APPENDIX

Changes to Claims:

1. (Twice Amended) A method for obtaining document constraint descriptors based on user signals, the method comprising:

(A) receiving user signals indicating a set of attribute-value relations that can apply to documents;

(B) using the user signals to obtain, without requiring user intervention, logical relations equivalent to the attribute value relations, the logical relations comprising at least one of a sort and a feature; and

(C) using the logical relations to obtain, without requiring user intervention, a document constraint descriptor defining a set of one or more constraints equivalent to the logical relations.

13. (Twice Amended) A machine for obtaining document constraint descriptors based on user signals, the machine comprising:

a processor; and

user interface circuitry for providing user signals to the processor;

the processor operating to:

receive user signals through the user interface circuitry indicating a set of attribute-value relations that can apply to documents;

use the user signals to obtain, without requiring user intervention, logical relations equivalent to the attribute-value relations, the logical relations comprising at least one of a sort and a feature; and

use the logical relations to obtain, without requiring user intervention, a document constraint descriptor defining a set of one or more constraints equivalent to the logical relations.